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with food consumption. There is no wife in the village who does not pursue this type of activity, as it is great disgrace not to be able to let blood flow even from a chicken if a guest comes to visit her husband, or at least provide her husband or children with a 'meat dish' on festival occasions. She should also raise goats and sheep, so that in case of death in the house an 'agira'—slain animal—can be always available at the funeral.

Between husband and wife no levity of behaviour is permissible, and no obvious physical intimacy of any sort in public or in front of the children. In fact, the husband's contacts with the house are very few. It is quite common to find a child who has been asked by his mother to call father from a meeting outside saying, 'O father, they say come and speak'. This is usually a call indicating that food is ready but neither the word food nor the word mother are ever supposed to be uttered in public. The father normally quits the house immediately he finishes his meal.

During the first year of marriage the wife does not eat with her husband, partly because he is in the matrilocal residence, and partly because the wife has not yet become the mother of the children. Only then can she eat with him, but she should never confess that she has eaten before he has, for her eating afterwards is the proper procedure.

From the standpoint of sentiment, the in-law relationship is a strong and binding force, involving exchange of gifts, food and visits similar in many ways to the kinship (lineage) obligations. It is said that the wife's mother is normally very affectionate, and always fussing over her son-in-law, especially when he is in his matrilocal residence, and this attitude is usually a source of complaint and jealousy on the part of the brothers and sisters of the bride. Yet the husband's mother is traditionally harsh, difficult and fault-finding. My informant, Ali, explains the difference of the sentiment of the two mothers-in-law by saying: 'The wife's mother is all too glad to procure a husband for her daughter, and she is grateful to him for marrying her daughter; thus she favours him. The husband's mother is resentful of the fact that her son's attachment, which was solely hers before marriage, is shared with his wife.'

It is also significant that the wife never refers to, or addresses her husband by his first name, especially in public. She either refers to him as 'Son of so and so' (his father), or 'my man', or less commonly 'my husband'. She addresses him by saying 'O man'; and the same applies to her husband who refers to his wife as 'my woman' or 'people of the house' and addresses her by saying 'O girl'.[1]

[1] Concerning the absence of any demonstration of tender feeling between wife and husband, Westermarck writes, 'It is considered indecent of a man to show any affection for his wife, and it would consequently be improper to speak of it in proverbs'. He further maintains that such an absence does not mean that no such feeling exists but has to be understood in relation to the Moorish ideas of decency. *Wit and Wisdom in Morocco*, London, 1930, p. 52.

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[844] [843] or from a visit, to give birth without undue pain. However, immediately the birth-pangs are felt, close female relatives are called upon, and soon the house teems with other women coming to offer their help. It should be mentioned here that while during pregnancy the husband's relatives [843] are expected to show more interest than the wife's, the actual event of birth is one of the obligations of the matrilineal side. It is natural that in the case of the first-born child the event of birth is attended to by the [591] mother and her relatives, as the woman is still in her matrilocal residence. If she has left it for any reason, she usually moves back to her mother's home to be attended to there, or the mother would be immediately called upon if her daughter is in her husband's house.

Thirty years ago the village had no official midwife (dayah), but since then a certificated woman has been responsible for deliveries. It is the members of the same family, however, who have been performing the functions of midwifery. The profession of a midwife is not a coveted one, as the midwife must be a woman 'who cannot be shamed'.[1] Like very old women, the midwife is a 'mukabila' who can meet men face to face, talk [834] to any man and walk in the streets without hiding her face. This might be also explained by the fact that the midwife is a woman engaged in an 'unclean' task, for a woman who is giving birth is considered to be 'unclean'. Yet in some cases the midwife is not called upon for birth, especially if a qualified woman exists in the family.

For delivery, the pregnant woman is seated on three stones, a proverbial position for anxiety and pain as expressed in the common saying 'Like a woman sitting on the stones'. The mother usually supports the back, while two other women each hold a leg and another two hold the outstretched arms. The usual birth-pangs are accompanied by requests of help from saints, especially 'Assayid al Badawi' who is the recognized saint to be called upon to 'widen the straits'. The after-birth is thrown out at night 'to be eaten by the dogs', the purpose fathering a wish that the woman would bear as many children as the bitch bears puppies—(dogs [825] being known for their proliferousness).[2]

The child's first cry is interpreted as his reaction to his coming from 'the wide to the narrow'.[3] He is immediately swaddled in old washed clothes belonging to the father or mother. The mother's jewellery, which had been taken off before delivery, is now put beside the child, as a gesture that the mother is no longer a mere bride (in the case of the first child), but [851] a mother whose child is more valuable to her than her jewels. In the case of a boy, other objects are put alongside, such as scissors and a sheathed

[1] It is perhaps because of her duty, the sex taboo is not enjoined upon her.

[2] For the belief in the importance of the placenta as a survival of the ancient Egyptian belief, see Seligman, 'Ancient Egyptian Beliefs in Modern Egypt', in *Essays and Studies presented to William Ridgeway*, Cambridge University Press, 1913, pp. 451–2.

[3] The women villagers' explanation seems to be in line with what some psychoanalysts call the 'birth-trauma'.

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might have been the relations between him and them before marriage, the newly created situation makes him no longer on familiar social terms with them. Traditionally, to remove this 'avoidance' the bridegroom's family should send within the first two months of marriage a ram to the bride's family as a 'reconciliation'.[1]

This avoidance could be regarded as a recognition that, in the initial stages of marriage, much of the behaviour of the married man to the family of his spouse has to be modified and reoriented. Even if he is married to his cousin, avoidance of her parents is required as a token of respect. Adoption of new phrases in reference to his in-laws, house habits of reserve, announcing his entrance into the house, manner of dress and similar items of etiquette must be observed by the newly married groom. In other words, previous informality and intimacy are replaced by a degree of formality to show consideration for the new ties of marriage.

This avoidance could also be considered as a manifestation that the husband, living in his matrilocal residence, feels uneasy and embarrassed in the home of a comparatively alien family; his ultimate home will be his patrilineal house to which he eventually takes his wife.[2] This custom also implies the psychological stresses involved in the new situation, where it is difficult to render the demands of consanguinity and affinity compatible, and where the support of the larger family unit has to be sustained for the maintenance of the newly created bonds of the individual family.[3]

Nadel explains such an avoidance in a similar manner. He maintains that in such a situation spontaneous shame and conventionalized sexual shame appear combined; for these cultural features express (and prevent) both the embarrassment between strangers (in a kinship sense) who are thrown together by marriage, and the embarrassment that springs from the awareness of the sexual occasion responsible for this new relationship.[4]

Such social procedures are implicit cultural solutions for smoothing transition from one state of life to another requiring concomitant adjustment and reorganization.

[1] Although avoidance between bridegroom and parents-in-law is still strictly observed, the breaking away from it does not necessarily have to be achieved through a gift of a 'slaughter', but occurs quite often nowadays through the exigencies of everyday life after the lapse of some time.

[2] This is the ideal course to be taken, but, as mentioned earlier, other factors, e.g. lack of space in his father's house, the bride's parents' attachment to their daughter and her children, might keep the husband in his matrilocal residence for years.

[3] This explanation is based on a similar situation referred to by R. Firth, *We, the Tikopia*, p. 343. This avoidance lends itself to psycho-analytical interpretation in terms of incestuous taboo. The uneasiness in the newly created situation could also be inferred from the 'mock fight' which could be classified, according to Van Gennep, as one of the 'rites de separation', while exchange of gifts and the partaking of food would fall in the category of 'rites d'agrégation'. Cf. Van Gennep, *Les Rites de Passage*, p. 198.

[4] S. F. Nadel, *Foundations of Social Anthropology*, p. 352. The psycho-analytical interpretation for such a taboo, according to Roheim, is that in this way an attempt is made to separate the wife from the mother, genitality from orality, and infantile dependency. *Psycho-analysis and Anthropology*, p. 425.

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its destination. Each of the two sides call out, 'The camel is ours, the camel is ours'. On this occasion, the fight took on a serious note, the camel became frightened, and some grown-ups had to intervene to prevent further developments. After the camel had safely entered the homestead, the two processions, mostly of women and boys by now, proceeded to an elevated piece of ground to let the bride and bridegroom, who were still in their separate groups, see the Nile from a distance. All then returned to the bride's house. The bridegroom with his selected friends, mostly unmarried, retired to the house built for him, while the bride stayed with her mother and other female relatives. The bridegroom remained with his friends till the morning, for according to custom he does not sleep with his wife till the fourth night.

On his first breakfast, however, the bridegroom with his friends were served, as usual, with special wheat-cakes called in the villagers' language 'kaak', with rice pudding and tea, for which the bridegroom paid a pound in return. After breakfast the 'Prince' and his associates went to kiss the hands of his father, mother and greet other relatives in his patrilineal house. This was followed by a visit to the clan's guest house, where they received pots of tea from the father's house as well as from neighbours of the family. Meanwhile the bridegroom's mother received her breakfast from her in-laws to which her answer was a visit accompanied by other women taking back the trays full of corn.

For the next two days the bridegroom was still accompanied by his selected friends, who shared his meals and remained at night with him. On the fourth night he was left alone to see his wife after dinner. Before he retired with her he had to offer her a pound as a 'placation' (ridwa) for her disrobing. On the following morning the boy brought a ram from his father's house for a special lunch to which this time only neighbours were invited; these also made gifts of money, sugar and tea, as their contributions.[1] Thus, through these elaborate procedures of exchanging food and gifts, the bridegroom establishes himself in his matrilocal residence amidst his neighbours and the new marriage is thus publicly declared and acknowledged.

At the end of the week, the bridegroom's mother with some of her friends went to visit her son's house, a ceremony called the 'treading of the house', since she actually went to see the rooms prepared for her son for the first time. The other women who were invited or who were fulfilling their obligations carried their own contribution of wheat flour, pigeons and money to be given to the bride's mother. These contributions would be considered as part of the bridegroom's provisions and measured out by the mother-in-law. The mother-in-law provided them with lunch and tea, thus marking the end of the wedding celebrations.

The end of the marriage celebrations marks the beginning of a formal avoidance between the bridegroom and his parents-in-law. Whatever

[1] This meal takes place even if the bridegroom is married to a girl living across the road.

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The following table shows the percentages of monogamous and polygamous marriages among the Moslem population in the country as a whole.

TABLE V

Percentage of monogamous and polygamous marriages

Number of wives	1927	1937
One wife	95·18	96·86
Two wives	4·49	2·95
Three wives	0·29	0·17
Four wives	0·04	0·02[1]

What does it feel like to be a newly married bride, confined to her house, with the occasional temptations of stealing a peep through the holes of the door onto the outside world? What is her complex emotion on seeing her husband returning home or while serving him, washing his hands, watching him eat, etc.? Does she fear her first sexual experience? Does her husband show an affection towards the girl in sexual intercourse? Are other erogenous zones used in sex? What are the overtones of small talk, if any, between husband and wife in the midst of the recurrent experiences of sexual intercourse which is one of the great pleasures in such a culture?[2] Such issues are significant to a study of the factors influencing the interaction of culture and personality. The writer cannot claim to give any substantial answer to such questions as the whole issue is taboo and it would be impossible for a person who is normally part of this culture to raise such points without endangering his prestige.

By getting married, the bridegroom and bride have achieved the hallmark of adulthood; and this brings satisfaction to one's parents. The transfer of the wife to the patrilocal residence is usually thought of after she bears a child, and by then her mother prepares for her a special headcover (tawada) to enable her to go out. The wife's settlement in her husband's house does not end her connection with her family, as it is her father's home which is always opened for her as a safeguard against any maltreatment from her husband or other members of his family.[3]

[1] *Pocket Census of 1948*, p. 12.

[2] It is a well-known fact that some newly wed husbands become impotent during their first sexual experiences and are usually then called tied (marbout). In such cases, a religious man would be invited to read for him, or write a charm which he wears under his clothes. Sometimes when this fact is known, a friend of this married man would go and tell him that he has 'tied' him; and for this the friend would invite the husband to a meal of pigeons.

[3] When a wife forsakes her husband's home for her father's she is known as 'hardani', and mediators or an Arab council would try to reconciliate the two sides. For a similar situation see Hilma Granqvist, *op. cit.*, pp. 225–32.